Drop-out rate among students

261. PROF. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the drop out rate among students are still very high;

(b) if so, the latest figures of drop-out rates in the elementary stage for boys and girls with rural and urban break-up; and

(c) the details of efforts being made to solve this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) and (b) The drop-out rate, though high in case of students in Classes I—V and I—VIII, continue to decline over the years. The available data in this regard is not segregated on rural-urban basis. According to the available information, drop-out rates in Classes I—V and I—VIII in 1994-95 are as following:—

	Class I—V	Class I—VIII
Girls	37.8	56.5
Boys	35.9	50.0
Total	36.3	52.7

(c) The measures taken by the Central Government and State Governments to solve this problem include micro-planning and community mobilisation; greater involvement of Panchyat Raj Institutions; setting up of Village Education Committees; improvement of school environment and infrastructure through Operation blackboard scheme; incentives for girls and SC/ST students such as free textbooks, uniforms and attendance scholarships; establishing and strengthening of institutions of teacher education; introduction of Minimum Levels of Learning and implementation of Mid-day Meals Programme.

Interest on agricultural loans

262. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation from some sections of agriculturists demanding lower rates of interest for agricultural loans; and

(b) if so, the reaction of his Ministry to such a demand and the steps proposed to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Various suggestions have been received for lowering the rates of interest on agricultural credit to small and marginal farmers. These suggestions are being examined in consultation with the Ministry of Finance.

Steps to deal with traffic congestions in Metropolitan Cities

263. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of growing traffic problem in the metropolitan cities in the country;

(b) whether the Ring Railway Scheme of Delhi is proposed to be revised and tackle the growing traffic problem; and

(c) the other steps taken to solve the increasing traffic problems of other metropolitan cities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In order to decongest traffic from Shahdara in the East and Tughlakabad in the South, Ring Railway was started in 1970 and completed before Asiad. These lines were originally planned as Goods avoiding lines and they were not planned to carry commuters. During Asiad the passenger services were run to enable people from outside Delhi to travel on